



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

IN RE APPLICATION

APPLICANT: Meryl Greenwald Gordon et al.

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FOR: Multiplayer Electronic Games

GROUP ART UNIT: 3713

EXAMINER: B. NGUYEN

ATT'Y DOCKET: GOR-001

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6-11-2

APPLICANT'S SUBSTITUTE BRIEF ON APPEAL

A Notice of Appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences was filed on January 24, 2002 in which Applicant appealed from the decision dated October 30, 2001 of the Examiner finally rejecting claims 1-21. The Applicant filed a Brief on Appeal on March 22, 2002 together with the small entity fee.

On June 4, 2002, the Examiner issued a Notification of Non-Compliance with 37 CFR 1.192(c). According to the Notification, it is the Examiner's position that the Applicant's grouping of claims was improper. During a telephone conference on June 11, 2002 with Examiner Jessica Harrison, Examiner Harrison expressed the opinion that since there are only two §103 rejections, there

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can only be two groups of claims, i.e. claims 1-18, 20 and 21 in one group and claim 19 in the other group.

It was and remains the Applicant's position that there are eleven groupings of claims because there are eleven features which distinguish the claims from the prior art. Applicant chose to group the claims according to how they would be argued. Examiner Harrison steadfastly maintained that this approach was improper under 37 CFR 1.192(c)(7).

In order to avoid further delay, and without waiving any of Applicant's rights, it was agreed that the Grouping of Claims section of the Brief be amended to simply say that the claims do not stand or fall together and that the identification of eleven groupings of claims be moved to the Argument section.

It would be appreciated if the Board so chooses to rule or comment on the propriety of grouping the claims according to issues as was done in the Applicant's original Brief on Appeal.

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(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The inventors are the real party in interest.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences.

(3) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Claims 1-18, 20, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod further in view of Logg.

(4) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

All amendments have been entered. No amendments were filed after the final rejection.

(5) SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to an electronic game for multiple, preferably two, players. One of the features of the game is that

cooperative (or joint) action by the players is required at certain points in the game as illustrated in Figure 2 and separate (or individual) action by the players is required at other points in the game as illustrated in Figure 1. Another feature of the invention is that the game display shows a split screen during some points in the game as illustrated in Figure 1 and a merged (non-split) screen at other points in the game as illustrated in Figure 2. The splitting and merging of the screen can be governed by the relative location of the players as illustrated in Figure 3 and/or whether joint or individual action is required as illustrated in Figures 4-7.

According to a preferred embodiment, different kinds of joint (or cooperative) action are required at different points in the game. See Figures 9-11.

According to another preferred aspect of the invention, no single player can complete the game without all of the players completing the game. See Figure 8 and specification pages 24 et seq.

According to the presently preferred embodiment, the game is an "adventure" game. See specification page 12 et seq. The term "adventure game" is defined at page 12 of the specification to mean a game where the players must traverse different landscapes, find things, solve puzzles, and perform tasks in order to complete

(win) the game. Adventure games often utilize a "first person" display. That is, the player sees the world of the adventure on the screen but does not see herself as a character on the screen. However, it is within the scope of the invention to utilize a third person display (as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2) where the player views a character on the screen and controls the movements of the character with the input device. The present invention may utilize either a first person display, a third person display, or a hybrid first-third person display.

(6) ISSUES

Whether claims 1-18, 20, and 21 are obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

Whether claim 19 is obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod further in view of Logg.

(7) GROUPING OF CLAIMS

The rejected claims do not stand or fall together.

(8) ARGUMENT

I. Summary of the Prior Art

U.S. Patent Number 5,405,151 to Naka et al. discloses a multi-player video game which has "a cooperative mode" and a "competition mode". The game does not require any cooperation among the players and the "cooperative mode" is when one player takes control of more than one character on the game field. In the '151 patent "cooperative mode" means that two characters perform the same actions in response to the control by a single player. As used in the present invention, "cooperation" among players means that players perform acts which complement each other to achieve what could not be achieved by a single player. Naka et al. shows a split screen mode but does not teach switching between a single screen mode and a split screen mode based on game criteria or player position. Interestingly, the attempt by Naka et al. to teach broadly results in teaching very little with respect to the instant invention.

U.S. Patent Number 5,080,377 to Stamper et al. discloses a video display system for displaying an oversized playing field. The playing field (a pinball game) includes opposing boundaries and a control component (pinball flipper). The control component interacts with one or more playing tokens (pinballs). The system identifies a playing window including the portion of the playing

field that includes the playing token that is closest to the control component. The playing window portion of the playing field and the portion of the playing field including the control component are displayed. In this manner, the display always includes the control component (flipper) and the playing token (pinball) closest thereto so that the player can visually relate the two aspects of the game.

U.S. Patent Number 5,354,063 to Curchod discloses a golf simulation system for two players contained in a single booth, which has a single screen on which are projected various views of simulated golf holes and into which two golfers independently but concurrently hit golf balls from within the single booth. Each player uses a portion of a golf tee area. Ball flight sensors sense the flight of the two independently, concurrently hit golf balls. A computer concurrently computes the flight and landing location of the first golf ball on the simulated hole and the flight and landing location of the second golf ball on the simulated hole as a function of the sensed velocity, trajectory, and spin of each of the respective golf balls. In the abstract of the '063 patent it is stated that "[t]he simulated golf hole can be viewed as a single view or as a split view when each player has a different viewing location." However, the phrase "viewing location" is never mentioned again in the patent. When describing the split view, the patent refers to the view of the hole from the location of the golf ball. Thus, the term "viewing location"

apparently means the view of the hole from the location of the golf ball.

U.S. Patent Number 4,738,451, reissued as Re. 35,314 to Logg, discloses a video maze game for multiple players where the players must cooperate at points in the game in order to complete the game. Only one mode of cooperation is required and it is relatively simple. The entire game field is larger than the video display but is scrollable in four directions. Each player appears as a character on the game field. Limited cooperation among players is forced by requiring that all characters be visible at all times. Thus, in order to scroll the game field, all of the characters must cooperate (either knowingly or inadvertently) to move in the same direction. Some other forms of optional cooperation are described but these cooperations are not required. At different points in the maze individual characters may be required to complete certain tasks in order to advance, but there is only one required cooperation discussed above.

II. Summary of the Argument

The claims are argued in eleven groups. The groups are listed below with a brief indication of their common distinguishing characteristic. The grouping of claims assumes that the dependent claims in a group will fall together only if their parent and intervening claims have fallen and that claims

that are included in more than one group will fall only if all of the groups they are in fall.

a) Claim 1 which requires a split screen and a merged screen based on player location;

b) Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, and 20 which require joint (or cooperative) action at certain points in the game;

c) Claims 4 and 15 which require joint action in separate locations in split screen mode;

d) Claims 6, 9, 12, 17, and 20 which require that no player can complete the game without all players completing the game.

e) Claims 7 and 16 which require joint action with a merged screen at one point in the game and individual action with a split screen at another point in the game;

f) Claims 8, 11, and 13 which require different joint actions at different points in the game;

g) Claim 10 which requires a split screen when players act individually and a merged screen when players act jointly;

h) Claim 14 which requires a split screen for some points in the game and a merged screen for other points in the game;

i) Claim 18 which requires cooperative action of a certain kind;

j) Claim 19 which requires an additional kind of cooperative action; and

k) Claims 1, 7, and 10 which require that the game be an adventure game.

III. Claims 1-18, 20, and 21 define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

a) Claim 1, which requires a split screen and a merged screen based on player location, defines an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

In claim 1, the split screen means is responsive to player location means such that when two players' game locations are within a preset range, the separate portions of the graphical display for the two players are merged into a single portion of the graphical display, and when the two players' game locations are outside the preset range, the graphical display for the two players is split into separate portions.

The Examiner has recognized that the automatic split screen feature claimed in claim 1 is not taught or suggested by Naka et al. It is the Examiner's opinion that Stamper et al. and Curchod teach an automatic split-screen means and that it would have been obvious to combine the references. It is respectfully submitted that (a) neither of the secondary references teaches split screen means which is responsive to player location, (b) Stamper et al. is not a multiplayer game, (c) Curchod is non-analogous art, and (d) there is no incentive to combine the references.

With regard to the first point, both of the secondary references link the split screen mode to game token location

rather than player location. In Stamper et al. the game token is a pinball and in Curchod the game token is a golf ball. Claim 1 specifically requires that the split screen be responsive to player location. Neither of the secondary references teaches or suggests such and thus, even if the references could be combined as suggested by the Examiner, the combination would not result in the game claimed in claim 1.

With regard to the second point, Stamper et al. is not a multiplayer game as claimed in claim 1 or as disclosed in Naka et al. It is the quintessential single player game, pinball. Thus, it is highly speculative that it could or would be combined with a multiplayer game in any meaningful way without the use of hindsight.

With regard to the third point, a golf simulator is not analogous to a video game. None of the classes and subclasses in the classification or field of search in Naka et al. can be found in the classification or field of search in Curchod. Thus, it is far from apparent how or why the golf simulator of Curchod would be combined with the "multi-player video game with cooperative mode and competition mode" of Naka et al.

With regard to the fourth point, no incentive for attempting a combination of Naka et al. with either of the secondary references can be found in the references or in the art in

general. The Examiner's stated incentive is simply to create "a better multiplayer electronic game".

To draw on hindsight knowledge of the applicant's Specification, when the prior art does not contain or suggest the knowledge, is to use the invention as a template for its own reconstruction--an illogical and inappropriate process in which to determine patentability. In In re Dembiczak, 50 USPQ2d 1614, (Fed. Cir. 1999), the Federal Circuit noted that

"[m]easuring a claimed invention against the standard established by section 103 requires the oft-difficult but critical step of casting the mind back to the time of invention, to consider the thinking of one of ordinary skill in the art, guided only by the prior art references and the then-accepted wisdom in the field. . . . Close adherence to this methodology is especially important in the case of less technologically complex inventions, where the very ease with which the invention can be understood may prompt one "to fall victim to the insidious effect of a hindsight syndrome wherein that which only the inventor taught is used against its teacher." Id. at 1617

The fact that the claimed invention is easy to understand does not remove the Examiner's duty of providing evidence of a teaching or motivation. "Combining prior art references without evidence of such a suggestion, teaching, or motivation simply takes the inventor's disclosure as a blueprint for piecing together the prior art to defeat patentability--the essence of hindsight." Id. The Examiner's stated motivation of making the game better is not evidenced by any of the art provided, and is clearly a construct

solely of the Examiner; there is no evidence in the prior art to support the stated motivation.

b) Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, and 20, which require joint (or cooperative) action at certain points in the game, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

None of the art used to reject these claims requires that the players act jointly or cooperatively at certain points in the game. This is abundantly clear in the case of Stamper et al. and Curchod since neither golf nor pinball encourage player cooperation. The Examiner has stated that means for requiring joint or cooperative action are disclosed in Naka et al. The Naka et al. reference was well known to the Applicant at the time this application was drafted and the claims were drafted with the intention of avoiding Naka et al.

At pages 3-4 of the instant application, the Naka et al. reference is described as follows: "[T]he game disclosed... does not require any cooperation among the players and the 'cooperative mode' does not involve cooperation among players...". The "cooperative mode" disclosed in the [Naka et al.] patent is when one player takes control of more than one character on the game field. In the [Naka et al.] patent "cooperative mode" means that two characters perform the same actions in response to the control by a single player." Emphasis added. See, also, Naka et al. Col.

19, lines 1-13 and lines 54-59. Naka et al. actually prevents two players from playing in a cooperative mode.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

c) Claims 4 and 15, which require joint action in separate locations in split screen mode, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

As argued above, the art cited in this rejection does not teach a requirement of joint or cooperative action on the part of the players. Moreover, to the extent that one would imagine a game having split screen and single screen mode which requires joint action at some points in the game and individual action at other points in the game, one might reasonably conclude that the joint actions occur when in single screen mode. Claims 4 and 15 claim the opposite. These claims require that players act jointly at separate locations in split screen mode. The Examiner has stated that Naka et al teaches this requirement. However, the Examiner's interpretation of Naka et al. is based on an incorrect understanding of what Naka et al. means by "cooperative mode".

Naka et al. best describes the meaning of "cooperative mode" at column 18, line 65 through column 19, line 13 which is reproduced below.

"Overview of the Multiple Player Cooperative Mode and Multiple Player Competition Mode

"In a current embodiment, a system in accordance with the present invention has two modes of operation: a cooperative mode and a competitive mode. In the cooperative mode, the first character responds to inputs applied to the first controller, and the second character follows the first character through the playfield. It can be said that the two game characters cooperate in that the first character leads the second character through the playfield. Not only does the second character follow the first character, but the second character also imitates the first character's movements. Thus, the first and second game characters both respond to inputs provided to the first controller with the second character following behind and seeming to imitate the first character." [Emphasis added.]

The "cooperative mode" described by Naka et al. is nothing like the cooperative or joint action described and claimed in the present invention. The cooperative or joint action of the present invention refers to action on the part of the players, not the "game characters" under the control of one player as described by Naka et al.

In addition, when describing the "cooperative mode", Naka et al. refers to Figures 37a-37e. All of these Figures show a single screen rather than a split screen. There is no suggestion in Naka et al. that any type of "cooperative mode" be employed while in a split screen mode.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

d) Claims 6, 9, 12, 17, and 20, which require that no player can complete the game without all players completing the game, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

One of the features of the invention as set out in claims 6, 9, 12, 17, and 20 is that no player can complete the game unless all the players complete the game. This is something of a corollary to the basic premise of the invention of a game which requires the players to cooperate. It should also be noted that in the case of an "adventure game", completing the game means winning the game. Thus, as can be appreciated from the description of the present invention, it is a feature of the claimed game that no one player "wins" unless all players "win".

It is the Examiner's position that this feature is taught by Naka et al. Although Naka et al. prevents a novice player or an inattentive player from losing by a wide margin, it certainly allows only one player to win.

It should also be noted that in golf and in pinball with multiple players where turns are taken in round robin fashion, one player always completes the game first.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

e) Claims 7 and 16, which require joint action with a merged screen at one point in the game and individual action with a split screen at another point in the game, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

As admitted by the Examiner, Naka et al. does not provide an automatic split screen based on points in the game. Although Naka et al. does appear to show competitive action in a split screen mode and "cooperative mode" in a single screen, there is no automated switching between modes as in the present invention and the "cooperative mode" of Naka et al. is not the same as the "joint action" claimed herein. In the claimed invention, at certain points in the game during a merged screen, joint action is required and at other points in the game, during a split screen individual actions are required. Naka et al. does not automatically switch from single screen to split screen and vice versa based on player location or based on any game criteria. Naka et al. switches to the so-called "cooperative mode" when the second player fails to operate the second controller for a period of time and reverts back to competition mode as soon as the second player manipulates the second controller. Neither mode of operation is required by the game.

Although Stamper et al. shows a split screen of sorts, it is in the context of a pinball game which is typically a single player game. It may be noted that some pinball games provide for two or more players in alternating or round robin control of a

pinball. To the extent that this might be called a "multiplayer game", it is not the type of multiplayer game claimed herein. Since only one player plays at a time, there is no opportunity for joint action by multiple players. Moreover, pinball is not a game which is amenable to joint or cooperative action among players.

Curchod provides a split screen in a golf simulator. However, Curchod does not require any joint action between the players either when in split screen mode or in single screen mode and the game of golf does not encourage any type of joint action. Golf is played in alternating or round robin fashion among the players. Thus, there is no opportunity for joint action as claimed herein.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

f) Claims 8, 11, and 13 which require different joint actions at different points in the game, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

As discussed above, none of the art cited in this rejection requires joint action among the players as that term is used herein. Thus, none of the references require different joint actions at different points in the game. Even if the "cooperative mode" in Naka et al. were considered the same kind of joint action

as required herein, there is only one cooperative mode action in Naka et al. and it is not related to any particular point in the game. When in the cooperative mode of Naka et al., one character follows and imitates the leader in response to commands from a single player. Naka et al. does not teach or suggest different cooperative modes at different points in the game. Also, as discussed above, Naka et al. does not require that the game enter the so-called "cooperative mode". So long as the second player keeps playing using the second controller, the game will never enter the "cooperative mode".

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

g) Claim 10, which requires a split screen when players act individually and a merged screen when players act jointly, defines an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

As discussed above, neither Stamper et al. nor Curchod requires or even allows joint action among players. The claimed joint action is not the same as the same as the "cooperative mode" taught by Naka et al. Furthermore, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to claim 10.

h) Claim 14 which requires a split screen for some points in the game and a merged screen for other points in the game, defines an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

As used in claim 14 and throughout the instant application, "points in the game" refers to either different scenes in the game or parts of the game which require different action by one or more players. See, e.g., pages 14, 18, 23 et seq. and Figure 8 of the specification. The cited art does not require split and merged screens based on this criteria. As mentioned above, Naka et al. apparently switches to a merged screen during "cooperative mode" which may occur at any time in the game, not at any particular point in the game. Curchod splits the screen depending on the location of the golf balls, not based on any particular point in the game. It is difficult to conceive of pinball as having different points in the game. Nevertheless, the split screen in Stamper et al. follows the location of the pinball which is not a "point in the game" as that term is used herein.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to claim 14.

i) Claim 18, which requires cooperative action of a certain kind, defines an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

Claim 18 requires cooperative action among or between players, where the kind of cooperative action includes at least one cooperative action selected from the group consisting of:

both players operating on the same object at the same time,
each player operating on a different object at the same time,

one player operating on a first object before the other player operates on said first object,

one player accomplishing one task while the other player accomplishes another task,

one player accomplishing a first task before the other player accomplishes a second task.

The Examiner has not specifically addressed the limitations of claim 18 in the Final Rejection. It is merely stated at page 3, line 10 of the Final Rejection that Naka et al. teaches "cooperative action means includes a plurality of different kinds of joint actions." The Examiner might assume that since the cooperative mode in Naka et al. causes the second to follow the first character and imitate the first character's movements, this represents a plurality of different kinds of joint actions. However, as discussed above, the "cooperative mode" in Naka et al. is not analogous to the joint action of the invention. Moreover, when in cooperative mode, the game characters in Naka et al. act

identically but with a slight time delay. Furthermore, the Naka et al. game does not require any cooperative action.

j) Claims 1, 7, and 10, which require that the game be an adventure game, define an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod.

Claims 1, 7, 9, and 10, as well as the claims which depend from them, require that the game be "an adventure game". The Examiner has dismissed this limitation as being "notoriously obvious since maze games or competitive games could be considered a adventure games." See page 5, lines 1-3 of the Final Rejection. The Examiner did not supply any evidence to support that conclusion and the Applicant submits that it is incorrect.

Prior to the Final Rejection, the Applicant requested, pursuant to MPEP §2144.03, that the Examiner cite a reference which teaches that "maze games or competitive games could be considered as adventure games". The Examiner ignored the request.

Prior to the Final Rejection, the Applicant submitted evidence that the term "adventure game" has a well established meaning for nearly thirty years. Adventure games are also referred to as "interactive fiction" games. The hallmark of an adventure game is that it is based on a story. Another common feature of an adventure game is that the player must solve puzzles

to advance the story. Maze games and sports simulators are clearly NOT adventure games as that term is well known in the art.

Moreover, all of the arguments made above with reference to claim 1 regarding the lack of incentive to combine the references also apply to these claims.

IV. Claim 19, which requires an additional kind of cooperative action, defines an invention which is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Naka et al. in view of either Stamper et al. or Curchod further in view of Logg.

Claim 19, which depends from claim 18, requires at least one of the following cooperative actions:

- holding a door for a player,
- handing a tool to a player,
- giving an item to a player,
- helping a player lift an object.

The Examiner has cited Logg for teaching that "cooperative action means includes sharing resources to [sic.] other players." The Examiner's stated incentive to combine Logg with the other references is "to come up with a variety of cooperative actions in a multiplayer video game." No evidence was cited to support this hypothetical incentive.

The closest Logg gets to teaching claim 19 is perhaps Logg's teaching of one player opening a door before another player can

pass through it. Yet this is not the same as holding a door, handing a tool, giving an item, or helping to lift. Moreover, Logg specifically states that the character in possession of the key may open the door. Logg, therefore, does not require that the character with the key open the door, nor does Logg require any of the actions listed in claim 19.

- V. Claims 1, 7, 10, and 18 were effectively allowed over Logg and Naka et al. in Paper Number 4.

Following the first Official Action in which only Logg and Naka et al. were applied to the claims, the Applicant's attorney attempted to contact the Examiner to discuss why the claims were allowable. The Examiner was not available and the Applicant's attorney spoke instead with Primary Examiner Jessica J. Harrison, the signatory on all of the actions in this application.

Primary Examiner Harrison was receptive to the points made by the Applicant's attorney and agreed that Naka et al. did not anticipate the split screen feature of the invention. It was also agreed that the cooperative features of the invention were distinguishable over Logg.

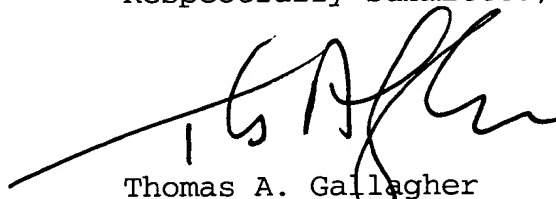
It is believed that the Examiner is now of the correct opinion that none of the claims can be rejected over Naka et al. and Logg without combining some other references. The references supplied by the Examiner to cure the deficiency of the rejection

in the first Official Action are Stamper et al. and Curchod. As discussed above, it is submitted that neither of these two references is properly combinable with Naka et al. It is further submitted that neither Stamper et al. nor Curchod is properly combinable with Logg. One need not look further than the fact that these references deal with a pinball game, a golf simulator, and a maze game. Without some convincing showing of incentive, it should be prima facie non-obvious to combine such diverse art.

VI. Conclusion

In light of all of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in order for allowance, and the Applicant respectfully requests that the Board direct the Examiner to allow the case.

Respectfully submitted,



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(9) APPENDIX

1 1. A multiplayer electronic adventure game for use with a
2 processing apparatus having a graphical display and input means
3 for receiving input from at least two players simultaneously, said
4 adventure game comprising:

5 a) player location means for associating a game location with
6 each player such that as each player moves through said adventure
7 game, each player's game location is updated; and

8 b) split screen means for dividing the graphical display into
9 separate portions of each player, said split screen means being
10 responsive to said player location means such that when two
11 players' game locations are within a preset range, the separate
12 portions of the graphical display for the two players are merged
13 into a single portion of the graphical display, and when the two
14 players' game locations are outside the preset range, the
15 graphical display for the two players is split into separate
16 portions.

1 2. A game according to claim 1, further comprising:

2 c) joint action means for requiring said at least two players to
3 act jointly with each other at certain points in said game.

1 3. A game according to claim 2, further comprising:

2 d) individual action means for requiring said at least two
3 players to act individually at certain points in said game.

1 4. A game according to claim 2, wherein:

2 said joint action means requires said at least two players to
3 act jointly in separate locations while said split screen means
4 divides the display into separate portion for each player.

1 5. A game according to claim 2, wherein:

2 said joint action means requires said at least two players to
3 act jointly in the same location while said split screen means
4 merges the display into a single portion.

1 6. A game according to claim 2, wherein:

2 no player can complete the game without all players also
3 completing the game.

1 7. An electronic adventure game for use with a processing
2 apparatus having a graphical display and input means for receiving
3 input from two players simultaneously, said adventure game
4 comprising:

5 a) split screen means for dividing the graphical display into
6 separate portions for each player and for merging the separate
7 portions into a single graphical display shared by both players;
8 and

9 b) game logic which requires each player to act individually and
10 jointly with the other player at different points in said
11 adventure game, wherein

12 said split screen means is responsive to said game logic such
13 that the graphical screen is split into separate portions when the
14 players are acting individually and the separate portions are
15 merged into a single portion when the players are acting jointly.

1 8. A game according to claim 7, wherein:

2 said game logic requires the players to act jointly in
3 different ways at different points in said game.

1 9. A game according to claim 7, wherein:

2 no player can complete the game without all players also
3 completing the game.

1 10. An electronic adventure game for use with a processing
2 apparatus having a graphical display and input means for receiving
3 input from two players simultaneously, said adventure game
4 comprising:

5 a) character generator means for generating a separate character
6 or pointer for each player;

7 b) split screen means for dividing the graphical display into
8 separate portions for each player and for merging the separate
9 portions into a single graphical display shared by both players;
10 and

11 c) game logic which provides opportunities for each player to
12 act individually and jointly with the other player at different
13 points in said adventure game, wherein

14 said split screen means is responsive to said game logic such
15 that the graphical screen is split into separate portions when the
16 players are acting individually and the separate portions are
17 merged into a single portion when the players are acting jointly,
18 said separate characters or pointers being separately controllable
19 when the players are acting jointly and when the players are
20 acting individually.

1 11. A game according to claim 10, wherein:

2 said game logic requires the players to act jointly in
3 different ways at different points in said game.

1 12. A game according to claim 10, wherein:

2 no player can complete the game without all players also
3 completing the game.

1 13. An electronic game for use with a processing apparatus having
2 a graphical display and input means for receiving input from two
3 players simultaneously, said game comprising:

4 a) individual action means for requiring the two players to act
5 individually at certain points in said game; and

6 b) joint action means for requiring the two players to act
7 jointly with each other at certain other points in said game,
8 wherein

9 joint action required by said joint action means includes a
10 plurality of different kinds of joint actions.

1 14. A game according to claim 13, further comprising:

2 c) split screen means for dividing the graphical display into
3 separate portion for each player at some points in said game and
4 for merging the display into a single portion for both players at
5 other points in said game.

1 15. A game according to claim 14, wherein:
2 said joint action means requires the two players to act
3 jointly in separate locations while said split screen means
4 divides the display into a separate portion for each player.

1 16. A game according to claim 14, wherein:
2 said joint action means requires said at least two players to
3 act jointly in the same location while said split screen means
4 merges the display into a single portion.

1 17. A game according to claim 13, wherein:
2 neither player can complete the game without the other player
3 also completing the game.

1 18. An electronic game for use with a processing apparatus having
2 a graphical display and input means for receiving input from two
3 players simultaneously, said game comprising:

4 a) individual action means for requiring the two players to act
5 individually at certain points in said game; and

6 b) cooperative action means for requiring the two players to act
7 cooperatively with each other at certain other points in said
8 game, wherein

9 cooperative action required by said cooperative action means
10 includes at least one cooperative action selected from the group
11 consisting of both players operating on the same object at the
12 same time, each player operating on a different object at the same
13 time, one player operating on a first object before the other
14 player operates on said first object, one player accomplishing one
15 task while the other player accomplishes another task, one player
16 accomplishing a first task before the other player accomplishes a
17 second task.

1 19. A game according to claim 18, wherein:

2 cooperative action required by said cooperative action means
3 includes at least one cooperative action selected from the group
4 consisting of holding a door for a player, handing a tool to a
5 player, giving an item to a player, helping a player lift an
6 object.

1 20. An electronic game for use with a processing apparatus having
2 a graphical display and input means for receiving input from two
3 players simultaneously, said game comprising:

4 a) individual action means for requiring the two players to act
5 individually at certain points in said game; and

6 b) cooperative action means for requiring the two players to act
7 cooperatively with each other at certain other points in said
8 game, wherein

9 neither player can complete the game without the other player
10 also completing the game.

1 21. A game according to claim 20, wherein:

2 cooperative action required by said cooperative action means
3 includes a plurality of different kinds of cooperative actions.